

We claim:

1. A method of forming a cannula comprising the steps of:
  - providing a cannula mandrel assembly, said assembly comprising separable parts including at least one nare forming mandrel, at least one mouthpiece forming mandrel having two substantially parallel prongs, and a main body forming mandrel comprising two separate components defining a void therebetween;
  - heating the cannula mandrel assembly to a desired temperature;
  - providing an uncured cannula forming polymeric material in flowable state;
  - applying at least one coating of the material to the cannula mandrel assembly to provide a desired coating material thickness on the cannula mandrel assembly to form the cannula;
  - curing the material coating the cannula mandrel assembly; and
  - disassembling the cannula mandrel assembly and withdrawing the at least one nare forming mandrel, and the at least one mouthpiece forming mandrel and the main body forming mandrel, comprising two separate components with a void formed therebetween, from the cannula.
2. The method according to claim 2, further comprising the step of manufacturing the cannular mandrel assembly from beryllium copper.
3. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of applying the polymeric material is by a dipping process.
4. The method according to claim 3, further comprising the step of heating the cannula mandrel assembly at a temperature of from about 350°F to about 550°F prior to the dipping process.
5. The method according to claim 3, further comprising the step coating the cannula with a layer of release material prior to applying the polymeric material.
6. The method according to claim 3, further comprising the step of applying the polymeric material by a plurality of dipping steps.

7. The method according to claim 5, further comprising the step of at least partially curing the polymeric material at a temperature of from about 410°F to about 450°F.

8. A method of forming a cannula comprising the steps of:

a) providing parts for a cannula mandrel assembly comprising first and second nare forming mandrels, a main body forming mandrel comprising separate first and second components with a void formed therebetween, and a divided mouthpiece forming mandrel having a first and a second passage forming prongs and an end connector attached to the first passage forming prong to slidably engage one of the components of the main body forming mandrel;

b) removably mounting the first one of the nare forming mandrels to the first component of the main body forming mandrel to provide a desired orientation of the first nare forming mandrel relative to the first component of the main body forming mandrel and slidably engaging the connector with the first component of the main body forming mandrel to provide a desired orientation of the mouthpiece forming mandrel relative to the first nare forming mandrel and the first component of the main body forming mandrel; and removably mounting the second one of the nare forming mandrels to the second component of the main body forming mandrel to provide a desired orientation of the second nare forming mandrel relative to the second component of the main body forming mandrel to form the cannula mandrel assembly;

c) heating the cannula mandrel assembly to a desired temperature;

d) dipping the heated cannula mandrel assembly into a plastisol of a polymeric material to provide a desired thickness of polymeric material on the cannula mandrel assembly to form the cannula;

e) at least partially curing the polymeric material;

f) extracting the nare forming mandrel, the mouthpiece forming mandrel, and the main body forming mandrel from the cannula.

9. The method according to claim 8, further comprising the step of mounting the first and second the nare forming mandrels substantially in parallel, to the main body forming mandrel, in holes disposed one on either side of a

central rectangular recessed section of the main body forming mandrel with which a slot defined by the connector is slidably engagable.

10. The method according to claim 8, further comprising the step of partially curing the polymeric material using heat of the heated cannula mandrel assembly and further curing of the plastics material of the cannula in an oven.

11. A cannula comprising:

a hollow main body having opposing openings at a first and second ends;

a first nasal prong and a second nasal prong defining a respective first and second nasal prong passages communicating with the hollow main body of the cannula;

a mouthpiece defining an fluid passage and a passage for receiving a shape retaining material.

12. The cannula as set forth in claim 11 further comprising the shape retaining material inserted in the passage for receiving the shape retaining material.

13. The cannula as set forth in claim 12 wherein, the mouthpiece has an original position defined by a desired shape in which the mouthpiece was manufactured, and a second position wherein the mouthpiece is retained by the shape retaining material in a curved or bent shape other than the original position.